

REMARKS

The foregoing amendment amends claim 1 and cancels claim 4. Pending in the application are claims 1-3 and 5-6, of which claim 1 is independent.

I. Telephone Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of the telephone interview conducted on December 18, 2007.

During the interview, Applicants discussed a proposed claim amendment with the Examiner with reference to Figure 2 of the present application. Applicants argued to the Examiner that the Ogami reference does not disclose the coolant flow field of the present Application.

In response, the Examiner indicated that he understood the structural distinction between the present application and the Ogami reference. The Examiner, however, noted that he needs to review further the proposed claim language and the cited art.

In a follow-up discussion with the Examiner on February 7, 2008, the Examiner indicated that the proposed claim amendment may overcome the outstanding rejections. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's assistance in this regard.

II. Claim Amendments

Applicants amend claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter recited in claim 4. Claim 4 is subsequently canceled. No new matter is added.

III. Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by United States Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0064266 ("hereafter Ogami"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

A. Claim 1

Applicants respectfully submit that the Ogami reference does not disclose the limitation that “said separator includes first and second metal plates which are stacked together, and said coolant flow field is formed between said first and second metal plates,” as recited in claim 1.

The Ogami reference teaches a fuel cell stack (10) that includes a plurality of fuel cell units (7). See FIG. 2. In the Ogami reference, the fuel cell unit (7) has a membrane electrode assembly (3) and reactant gas supply separators (5) for supplying fuel gas and oxidant gas to the gas diffusion electrodes (2a, 2b). See FIG. 1.

For latent heat cooling, the Ogami reference supplies water from the water supply grooves (15) formed on the cathode side of the separator (5) to the fuel supply grooves (9a) formed on the anode side of the separator (5). The water is mixed with fuel gas provided to the fuel supply grooves (9a).

In contrast, claim 1 requires that the separator includes first and second metal plates which are stacked together, and the coolant flow field is formed between the first and second metal plates. For example, as shown in FIG. 2 of the present application, the fuel cell (10) may include a membrane electrode assembly (12) and metal separators (13) for sandwiching the membrane electrode assembly (12). In the present application, each of the metal separators (13) may include first and second plates (14, 16) stacked together to form a coolant flow field (42) therebetween. The Ogami reference does not disclose this feature. In the Ogami reference, each separator (5) has only a single plate. There is no disclosure in the Ogami reference of a separator including metal plates stacked together to form a coolant flow field therebetween.

In view of reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the Ogami reference fails to teach or suggest all of the limitation of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 1.

B. Claims 2-6

Claim 4 is canceled.

Claims 2-3 and 5-6 depend from claim 1 and, as such, incorporate the subject matter of claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-3 and 5-6 are in condition for allowance for at least the reasons set forth above regarding claim 1.

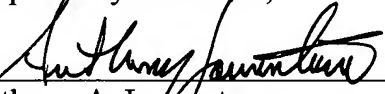
IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. If a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. TOW-051RCE from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

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Respectfully submitted,

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